

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 08267 01 OF 02 071405Z

44

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 OMB-01 IGA-01 TRSE-00 ITF-05 SR-02

ORM-01 FDRE-00 IO-10 /075 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3897

INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC HONOLULU IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 8267

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, TH, US, VS

SUBJ: PRAMAN ON SOUTH VIETNAMESE PLANES IN THAILAND

DEPUTY PRIMEMINISTER AND DEFENSE MINISTER PRAMAN ADIREKSAN
HELD A NEWS CONFERENCE MAY 7. FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL
USIS TRANSLATION OF HIS REMARKS ON THE RTG IMPOUNDMENT OF
SOUTH VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE PLANES IN THAILAND.

REPORTER....

PRAMAN: WE ARE NOT ALLOWING THEM TO BE MOVED OR TAKEN AWAY
AT PRESENT. WE HAVE ISSUED AN ORDER ALREADY.

REPORTER: IS THE ORDER IN WRITING OR IS IT AN ORAL ORDER?

PRAMAN: AN ORDER HAS BEEN ISSUED ALREADY.

REPORTER: SINCE WE DON'T KNOW WHEN THEY ARE BROUGHT HERE,
HOW COULD WE KNOW SHOULD THEY BE TAKEN AWAY?

PRAMAN: WHEN A PLANE LANDS AT AN AIRFIELD, REGARDLESS
WHERE THAT AIRFIELD MAY BE, WE WILL NOT ALLOW THAT PLANE
TO TAKE OFF, SO IT WILL HAVE TO REMAIN WHERE IT IS. IT

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 08267 01 OF 02 071405Z

COULD NOT BE TAKEN AWAY ANYWHERE, COULD IT?

REPORTER: THE UNITED STATES STATES IT HAS TAKEN AWAY SOME PLANES ALREADY. WHAT ACTION WILL BE TAKE TO DEMAND FOR THOSE PLANES TO BE RETURNED, OR...

PRAMAN: I HAVE STATED IN A NEWS CONFERENCE ALREADY THAT THERE ARE TWO ISSUES IN REGARD TO PLANES. THIS IS THE CASE, NOT ONLY IN REGARD TO PLANES, BUT IN REGARD TO ALL KINDS OF VEHICLES, OR EVEN IN REGARD TO PERSONS WHO ENTER OUR COUNTRY. ONW ISSUE IN GENERAL IS THAT WHEN ANYBODY ENTERS THAILAND, BRINGING WEAPONS WITH HIM OR ANY VEHICLE OR MEANS OF TRANSPORT, WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO IMPOUND THEM. USE THE WORD IMPOUND, NOT SEIZE. IT IS NECESSARY TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE IN THE MEANINGS OF WORDS USED. IF THE WORD "SEIZE" IS USED IT MEANS THAT WE ARE ENEMIES, THEREFORE THE WORD "SEIZE" IS USED. THIS IS NOT THE CASE AT ALL, THEREFORE THE WORD "IMPOUND" HAS TO BE USED.

THE OTHER ISSUE IS A MUTUAL AGREEMENT REACHED BEFOREHAND. AN EXAMPLE THAT CAN BE CITED IS THAT AMERICA REACHED AGREEMENT BEFOREHAND THAT IT WOULD EVACUATE PEOPLE FROM SAIGON TO THAILAND, THEN IT WOULD TAKE THEM AWAY. IN THIS CASE, THE MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION USED TO BRING EVACUEES HERE MUST BE ALLOWED TO BE TAKEN OUT OF OUR COUNTRY, TAKING THE PEOPLE BROUGHT HERE IN THEM. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THIS EXPLANATION?

REPORTER: THEN WE HAVE TO CONFORM TO BOTH ISSUES?

PRAMAN: YES. WE ARE CONFORMING TO BOTH ISSUES. ANY PLANE ON WHICH THERE IS NO AGREEMENT WITH US, WE MUST IMPOUND AND WE MUST NOT ALLOW IT TO BE TAKEN OUT OF OUR COUNTRY.

REPORTER: HAVE ANY IMPOUNDED PLANES BEEN TAKEN OUT OF OUR COUNTRY?

PRAMAN: OF COURSE NOT. ANYTHING THAT WE HAVE IMPOUNDED MUST KEEP IN OUR CUSTODY. HOW CAN WE ALLOW IT TO BE TAKEN AWAY? IF WE ALLOWED IT TO BE TAKEN AWAY, NOW COULD IT BE CALLED IMPOUNDMENT?

REPORTER: ISN'T THE NUMBER OF PLANES THAT HAVE BEEN TAKEN AWAY LARGER THAN THE NUMBER LEFT HERE?

PRAMAN: WE ARE STILL CHECKING UP ON THE MATTER OF THE NUMBER OF PLANES.

REPORTER: ISN'T THERE AN AGREEMENT NOW THAT THE UNITED STATES MUST INFORM THE THAI GOVERNMENT BEFOREHAND BEFORE IT CAN BRING IN OR TAKE OUT A PLANE OR PLANES?

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 08267 01 OF 02 071405Z

PRAMAN: THAT IS AN AGREEMENT IN FORCE IN GENERAL ALREADY. IN USE OF THE AIRFIELD IN U-TAPAO, THE AMERICAN AUTHORITIES MUST REQUEST PERMISSION FROM US BEFORE ANY PLANE CAN LAND OR CAN TAKE OFF.

REPORTER: THIS TIME THEY DID NOT REQUEST PERMISSION.

PRAMAN: THIS IS AN AGREEMENT IN GENERAL THAT IS IN FORCE. IN THE EVACUATION OF PERSONS, OR EVACUATIONS FROM VIETNAM, THIS AGREEMENT IS IN FORCE AND PERMISSION HAS TO BE APPLIED FOR

PLANES TO LAND OR TO TAKE OFF. ANY AND EVERY PLANE TAKING
OFF FROM U-TAPAO AIRFIELD, REGARDLESS OF ITS DESTINATION,
AND ANY AND EVERY PLANE LANDING IN U-TAPAO MUST OBTAIN PERMISSION
FROM THAILAND FIRST. IN THE VIETNAM ISSUE, THE UNITED STATES
CONTACTED US, STATING IT MUST EVACUATE PEOPLE BECAUSE VIETNAM --
SAIGON -- WOULD FALL. IT REQUESTED PERMISSION TO EVACUATE ITS
PEOPLE FROM SAIGON, AND IT REACHED AGREEMENT ON EVACUATION WITH US.

REPORTER: M.....

PRAMAN: YES. WE WILL SEE HOW THEY HAVE GONE TO
VARIOUS COUNTRIES. THEY HAVE EVACUATED PEOPLE TO SUBIC BAY,
AND VARIOUS OTHER PLACES IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND TO GUAM.
IN CASES IN WHICH PLANES WERE USED TO BRING EVACUEES
HERE, WE MUST ALLOW THEM TO TAKE THOSE PLANES AWAY. SHOULD WE
IMPOUND THOSE PLANES, HOW COULD EVACUEES BE TAKEN OUT OF
OUR COUNTRY?

REPORTER: COULD YOU DISCLOSE THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF
EVACUEES?

PRAMAN: I CANNOT REMEMBER FIGURES.

REPORTER: WERE WE INFORMED OF THE NUMBER OF PLANES TO BE USED FOR
EVACUATION OF PEOPLE HERE?

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 08267 02 OF 02 071356Z

44

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CINCPAC HONOLULU IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 8267

PRAMAN: OUR OFFICIALS ARE THERE. I WILL GIVE YOU THEIR NAMES
IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THEM.
REPORTER: WHAT ABOUT WEAPONS AND PLANES IN ADDITION TO
THOSE THEY BROUGHT HERE?
PRAMAN: WE MUST CONSIDER IT FROM THIS ANGLE. AFTER SAIGON FELL
THERE WERE NO MORE EVACUATIONS.
REPORTER: AND WHAT ABOUT CAMBODIA?
PRAMAN: CAMBODIA FELL FIRST. IN THE CASE OF CAMBODIA,
THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT. WE IMPOUNDED ALL PLANES THAT CAME
FROM CAMBODIA, INCLUDING WEAPONS AND EVERYTHING BROUGHT
HERE. WE IMPOUNDED EVERYTHING.
REPORTER: IN THE CASE OF A HELICOPTER THAT CAME AND LANDED
IN SURIN PROVINCE, THE UNITED STATES SENT OFFICIALS FROM
U-TAPAO TO TAKE IT AWAY TO THE BASE.
PRAMAN: WE HAVE IMPOUNDED EVERYTHIN. I MUST INVESTIGATE
FACTS IN REGARD TO THE INCIDENT YOU HAVE SOPKEN OF, IN ORDER TO
SEE WHETHER THE REPORT IS TRUE OR NOT.
REPORTER: FOR HOW LONG A TIME DO YOU BELIEVE ALL THESE ARMAMENTS
WILL HAVE TO BE IMPOUNDED BY US?
PRAMAN: WE WILL CONTINUE IMPOUNDING THEM UNTIL...AMERICAN HAS
SAID NOW THAT THE ARMAMENTS WE HAVE IMPOUNDED BELONG TO IT.
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PAGE 02 BANGKO 08267 02 OF 02 071356Z

VIETNAM CLAIMS THAT THEY BELONG TO IT. LET THEM COME HERE AND
HOLD NEGOTIATIONS WITH EACH OTHER, THEN WHO IS THE OWNER CAN
TAKE THEM AWAY. THAT'S ALL WE CAN SAY.
REPORTER: AFTER IMPOUNDMENT, DO OUR OFFICIALS GO AND CHECK UP ON
THEM AND GUARD THEM?
PRAMAN: OF COURSE THEY MUST BE GUARDED. WE MUST HAVE PROOF.
REPORTER: I DIDN'T QUITE UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU SAID JUST NOW
THEN YOU SAID THAT PLANES WHICH TRANSPORTED EVACUEES HERE
MUST BE USED TO TAKE THOSE EVACUEES AWAY. WHAT ABOUT CASES,
SUCH AS THAT OF CAMBODIAN EVACUEES, WHO WERE TAKEN AWAY TO
THE UNITED STATES YESTERDAY, USING CHARTERED PLANES?
PRAMAN: CHARTERED PLANES ARE ANOTHER MATTER ALTOGETHER.
DO YOU MEAN THAT THESE PLANES COME FROM VIETNAM OR CAMBODIA?
IF THEY ARE CHARTERED PLANES THEY COME FROM ELSEWHERE,
SO THERE IS NO PROBLEM AND NO DISPUTE OVER THEM. THE
ARGUMENT AT PRESENT IS ON ARMAMENTS WHICH CAME FROM VIETNAM
OR FROM DAMBODIA, WHO IS THEIR OWNER. BUT IF PLANES ARE CHARTERED
FROM ELSEWHERE TO COME AND TAKE AWAY EVACUEES, THAT WOULD BE
GOOD BECAUSE THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM.
REPORTER: COULD YOU DISCLOSE THE NUMBER OF PLANES OR ARMAMENTS
WHICH DO NOT BELONG TO THE UNITED STATES?
PRAMAN: I CANNOT REMEMBER FIGURES. I'M SORRY.
REPORTER: JUST NOW YOU SAID THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD HAVE TO
HOLD NEGOTIATIONS WITH EACH OTHER. WHERE WOULD THOSE
NEGOTIATIONS BE HELD?
PRAMAN: THAT WOULD DEPEND ON THEM. WE ARE THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE.
WE ARE LIKE THE TEMPORARY OWNERS, IN CHARGE OF SAFEGUARDING THE

ARMAMENTS.

REPORTER: IT COULD BE CALLED CALLING ON THEM TO COME AND REACH AGREEMENT FIRST. BUT ISN'T IT OUR RIGHT TO DECIDE WHO TO RETURN THEM TO?

PRAMAN: NO. WE WILL TURN THEM OVER TO WHOEVER IS THE OWNER. IN OTHER WORDS, WE DO NOT WANT TO BECOME INVOLVED.

REPORTER: WHAT DATE HAVE YOU FIXED FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO BE HELD?

PRAMAN: I DON'T KNOW. IT IS THEIR AFFAIR. IT'S NONE OF OUR BUSINESS. WE GET NOTHING AT ALL OUT OF THIS DISPUTE, BUT WE HAVE TO WASTE TIME SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKING AFTER THESE ARMAMENTS.

REPORTER: WON'T WE INVITE THEM TO COME AND HOLD NEGOTIATIONS?

PRAMAN: I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T SEE ANY NEED TO INVITE THEM TO COME AND HOLD NEGOTIATIONS.

REPORTER: ARE THOSE ARMAMENTS STILL KEPT IN U-TAPAO?

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 08267 02 OF 02 071356Z

ARE THERE ANY OTHER ARMAMENTS IMPOUNDED ELSEWHERE?

PRAMAN: WE ARE KEEPING MOST OF THEM THERE.

REPORTER: SINCE THE ARMAMENTS ARE IN OUR COUNTRY AND WE MUST ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEM, COULDN'T WE FIX A DATE FOR THEM TO COME AND HOLD NEGOTIATIONS?

PRAMAN: WE NOTE DOWN WHO WILL COME OR WHO WILL NOT COME. WE WILL NOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY DAMAGE.

REPORTER: NOW A DISPUTE HAS BROKEN OUT OVER OWNERSHIP, WHAT CAN WE DO. WE ARE THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND SOUTH VIETNAM, WHO ARE DISPUTING OVER OWNERSHIP OF THESE ARMAMENTS.

PRAMAN: AGREEMENT CAN AND MUST BE REACHED. IT WILL DEPEND ON WHO HAS BETTER PROOF OF OWNERSHIP, THEN JUDGMENT MUST BE GIVEN IN FAVOR OF THE SIDE WHICH HAS BETTER PROOF.

REPORTER: DOESN'T THAT DEPEND ON US ALSO?

PRAMAN: WE WILL WAIT AND SEE THEM HOLD NEGOTIATIONS.

WE ARE THE PERSONS SAFEGUARDING THEM. THIS MEANS THAT THESE ARMAMENTS WERE BROUGHT HERE, AND WE WILL RETURN THEM TO WHOEVER IS THEIR OWNER. THAT'S ALL.

MASTERS

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